

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

RE: THE CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 14, 16, 33, 34, 50 and 51 have each been amended so as to be placed in independent form, and to include all of the subject matter of their respective parent claims 1, 18 and 35.

No new matter has been added, and no new issues with respect to patentability have been raised. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 14, 16, 33, 34, 50 and 51 be approved and entered.

RE: THE DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 101

Claims 1-13, 17-32 and 35-49 have been canceled in order to overcome the double patenting rejection under 35 USC 101.

RE: THE NON-STATUTORY DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTION

Submitted herewith is a Terminal Disclaimer with respect to commonly owned USP 6,677,973 in order to overcome the non-statutory double-patenting rejection of claims 52-108. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

RE: THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

It is respectfully pointed out that USP 6,452,687 ("Suzuki et al") has a filing date of March 12, 1999, which is after the priority date of the present application of October 2, 1998. Accordingly, in order to remove Suzuki et al as a reference, submitted herewith is an accurate English translation of JP 281466/1998, filed October 2, 1998, whose priority is claimed by the present application. It is respectfully submitted that the claims in the present application are fully supported by the disclosure in Japanese priority application JP 281466/1998, and that the present application is entitled to the priority date of October 2, 1998 (which is earlier than the U.S. filing date of Suzuki et al). Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Suzuki et al is not a proper reference against the present application, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection based on Suzuki et al be withdrawn.

RE: CLAIM FEE

The application previously contained 108 claims, of which 6 were independent, and the appropriate claim fee was paid for such claims. The application now contains 64 claims, of which 9 are independent. Accordingly, a claim fee in the amount of \$258.00 for the addition of 3 extra independent claims is attached hereto. In addition, authorization is hereby given to charge any additional fees which may be determined to be required to Account No. 06-1378.

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In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14-16, 33, 34 and 50-108 are now all in condition for immediate allowance.

Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

Application No. 10/692,909
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,


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